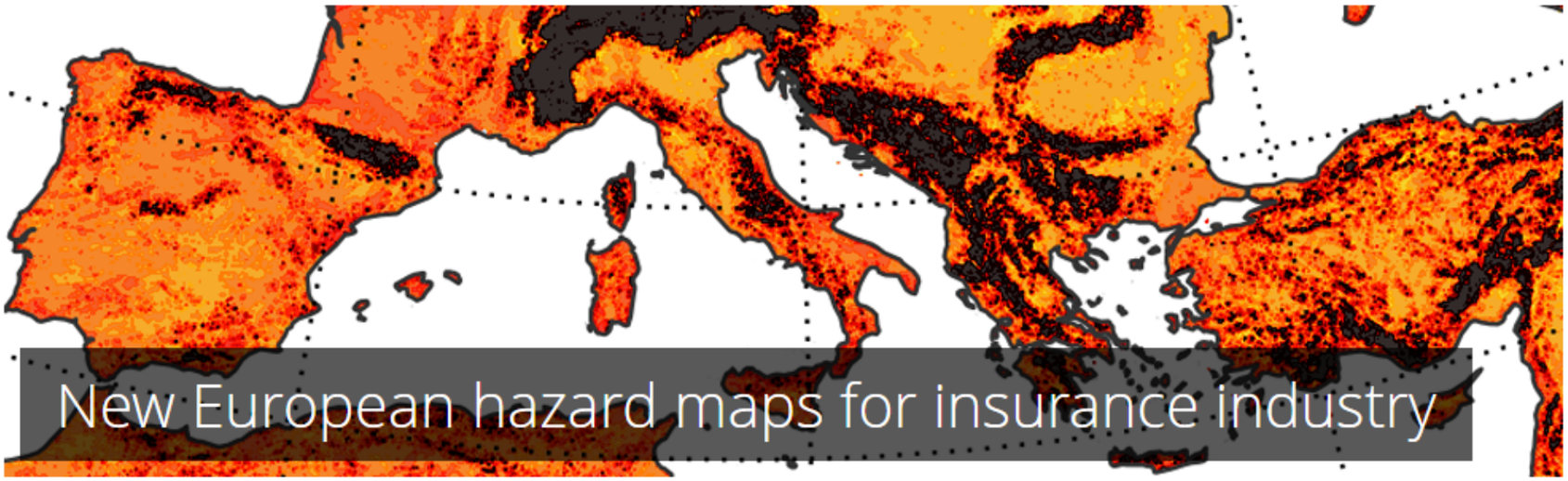

New European hazard maps for insurance industry

10 November 2015 - The maps will show the likely location and severity of damaging winds.

Wind storms are one of the greatest causes of property damage in Europe and the Met Office is launching a new series of maps designed to show the likely location and severity of the most damaging winds. Met Office Euro Windstorm Hazard Maps answer the question of what extremes can be expected at different probabilities for any location in Europe.

Euro Windstorm Hazard Maps are relevant to any enterprise managing significant property and infrastructure risk. For example they can be used to help insurers make pricing decisions when covering residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural exposures. They are also valuable to risk researchers in engineering, construction and reinsurance.

The hazard maps show maximum gust values across 35 European countries on a 4.4 km grid. Probabilities shown range from a 1 in 5 year event up to a 1 in 200 year event; a significant threshold for insurance under European regulations. They outline local impacts enabling risk analysts, underwriters and actuaries to assess the risk at a local level to make portfolio and pricing decisions.

Paul Maisey, Science team leader for Insurance at the Met Office said: "We know the considerable damage caused by wind storms over recent decades. Storms like that of 1987, Daria and Lothar have cost the insurance industry billions of pounds. Windstorms are less localised than flood; but they can have a great impact across broad European regions and so have the potential to cause the greatest insurance loss of any peril in a winter season. High resolution hazard maps offer a step forward in managing that risk."

The Met Office Euro Windstorm portfolio is derived from reanalysis of historical data sets using the latest world leading numerical weather prediction models. For more information on the methodology and model sources, and Met Office services for the insurance sector, please see Insurance and Capital Markets.

Last updated: 20 November 2015